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Approved For Release 2003/01/24 : CIA-RDP63-00313A000500040040-9

19 JAN 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Surfacing of RX-12

1. The decision to surface the existence of an A-12 type vehicle jeopardizes the actual A-12 program to a point that it will not likely be possible to maintain the covert character of this program, especially since the decision and the proposed DOD press release are tied directly to the B-70 controversy which is most likely to involve considerable political controversy and examination. The question then is: What line of action in the initial press releases would be in the best interests of the Nation and most advantageous in salvaging the future of the A-12 and its mission.

2. In this respect, the proposed DOD press release (Attachment #1) is basically true and forms a creditable story which per se cannot be disproved. Should public and press be receptive to the proposed release, then some cover for our present and future OXCART activities will be achieved. The only general criticism is that the present first sentence of the first paragraph lacks details about the schedule of procurement mentioned; hence, it is not a meaningful start to the story.

3. We should consider an alternative to the proposed DOD statement which would incorporate an admission of CIA participation in the program. To accomplish this, we would propose changing the last sentence of the first paragraph to read as follows: "It can now be revealed that the proposed R-X is to be developed as an outgrowth of a secret experimental aircraft of very high performance and advanced technical concept." Additionally, the first sentence of the second paragraph would be changed to read as follows: "The development of the aircraft designated the X-21 was undertaken jointly by the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency in mid-1959 as the result of a proposal by Lockheed that was notable for its advanced technical concepts."

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4. Arguments for inclusion of the CIA as a participant in the development of an A-12 type vehicle include the following:

A. The mention of Lockheed and methodology employed in the X-21 development will draw a comparison to the U-2 program and speculation of CIA's involvement and possible true purpose of the present program. Realistically it must be assumed that technical people in the aircraft industry as well as the technical press are aware of the true elements and have refrained from comment in National interest. The proposed release may be interpreted by them as an attempted deception and may relieve them from their voluntary censorship and invite all-out reporting, which will evitably result in the CIA being involved.

B. By reference to the involvement of the CIA in the initial undertaking, the U. S. Government will be in a better position to maintain the veil of secrecy around methods employed in the development of the aircraft through legal CIA security prerogatives.

C. By use of this release, we cannot be accused later of attempting to hide CIA participation to avoid normal controls.

D. Provides a legal explanation for procurement methods.

E. Tends to enhance CIA prestige.

F. Provides more lead time to surface a non-AR model first.

G. Would tend to provide more direct security to the remaining aspects of the A-12 Program.

H. Takes advantage of present favorable public opinion environment as to reconnaissance.

I. No CIA affiliation story:

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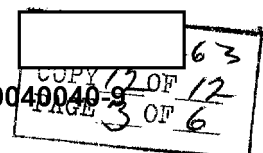
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- (1) Will give rise to more questions than it answers.
- (2) Tie the hands of CIA by attempting to pretend no CIA affiliation.
- (3) Will raise question of procurement practices that cannot be answered.
- (4) Although true, is an attempt to misrepresent and may cause embarrassments.

5. Arguments against inclusion of the CIA as a participant in the development of an A-12 type vehicle include the following:

- A. Such admission of CIA participation would be a departure from a basic tenet of Intelligence philosophy and could well result in widespread criticism in this country and abroad.
- B. The proposed DOD release is basically true and forms a creditable story which per se cannot be disproved. Should public and press be receptive to proposed release, then some cover for our present and future OXCART activities will be achieved.
- C. It might be possible to keep CIA out of the picture and, therefore, preclude criticism of CIA involvement in such operations and would eliminate Soviet opportunities for propaganda against CIA motives.
- D. Official admission of CIA involvement may result in:
 - (1) Compromise of deception techniques utilized in industry to disguise the true nature and purpose of work performed (in house cover stories).
 - (2) Compromise of methods and techniques used by CIA in "black" contracting and maintaining industrial and operational security.

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- (3) Giving the R-X a CIA taint that might be extremely difficult to purge from the R-X aircraft and its utilization possibly putting it in the notorious U-2 category.
- (4) Compromising the cover of CIA Special Agents who investigated numerous personnel associated with the program.
- (5) Provoke Soviet propaganda.
- (6) Invite certain Congressional and editorial criticisms on scope of CIA activities.
- (7) Suggest probability of future covert operations.
- (8) Exposing other CIA developments.

6. The decision as to whether to disclose CIA affiliation in the initial press release under the present circumstances is one of value judgment to be made at the highest levels where all of the above ramifications can be carefully weighed.

7. In any event, we feel that it is imperative to:

A. Prevent the disclosure of the AR aspects and capabilities of the vehicle.

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B. To protect the scope and nature of

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SIGNED

for

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

Attachment as stated

Signature recommended:

cc: DDCI
Exec. Dir.

[(Signed) Jack C. Ledford
AD/OSA

AD/OSA:JCL:js (8 Jan 63)

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